

Glossary of Terms

Alien: Any person who is not a citizen or a national of the U.S.

Amerasian Act: Public Law 97-359 (Act of 10/22/82) provides for the immigration to the United States of certain Amerasian children. In order to qualify for benefits under this law, an alien must have been born in Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Thailand, or Vietnam after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, and have been fathered by a U.S. citizen.

Amerasian (Vietnam): A person of American and Asian descent, especially one whose mother is Asian and whose father is American. The term is used primarily with reference to children fathered in Asia by American servicemen. Amerasians born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976, who were fathered by a U.S. citizen, are eligible for benefits and services from the VRRP program. These Amerasians – along with their spouses, children, and parents or guardians when they arrive with them in the United States, who also qualify for VRRP – are issued immigration visas under the authority of Public Law 100-202 (and the amendments to it in P.L. 100-461, P.L. 101-167, P.L. 101-513, and P.L. 101-649).

Applicant for Asylum: A person living in the United States who does not want to return to his/her country because of fear of persecution and has requested, but has not yet received, asylum from the United States by filing form I-589 with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. An applicant for asylum is not eligible to receive benefits and services from the VRRP program until he/she has received an official letter granting asylum status.

Asylee: Someone who has applied for and received asylum. Asylees are eligible for the benefits and services of the Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program.

Asylum: Protected status given to non-citizens who are in the U.S. or at a border and demonstrate that they qualify under the refugee definition. A person granted asylum is referred to as an “asylee,” or more generally as a “refugee.”

Case Management Services: The determination of appropriate service(s), the referral to such service(s), and tracking of the refugee’s participation in such service(s).

Comprehensive Resettlement Plan (CRP): A plan required for all refugees receiving services from contract service providers that includes an assessment of the refugee's overall needs, interests and aptitudes, present abilities, previous education, work experiences, language ability, and potential barriers to self-sufficiency. In addition, the plan includes service strategies to address needs and overcome barriers to the achievement of self-sufficiency, including employment services, English language training, transitional cash and medical assistance, and other support services. Additionally, the CRP includes input from the refugee being served.

Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program: A program created by Congress under the Title V of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 that provides federal reimbursement to participating States for cash and medical assistance to Cuban and Haitian entrants under the same conditions and to the same extent as such assistance and services are made available to refugees. Also considered entrants for the purposes of federal reimbursement are Cuban and Haitian nationals who are paroled into the U.S. or are subject to exclusion or deportation proceedings, or applicants for asylum.

Discretionary Grant Program: Funds from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for social service programs that address critical unmet needs and/or benefit refugees throughout the state by strengthening economic self-sufficiency, family stability, or community integration. ORR designates discretionary money for specific purposes and relies on the Office of Newcomer Services to administer the funds in Virginia. These grants have allowed ONS and its contract service providers to be more flexible and creative in order to meet needs that are not covered by other categorical Office of Refugee Resettlement funds.

Domestic Health Assessment: The initial medical screening that a refugee receives at a local health department within the first thirty days of arrival in the United States. It is designed to eliminate health-related barriers to successful resettlement while protecting the health of the U.S. population.

Economic Self Sufficiency: The ability of a refugee or the refugee's family unit to earn an income that will be self-supporting without any dependence on public cash assistance.

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): An Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) issued document required for asylees and other immigrants in order for them to be authorized to work in the United States.

English Language Training (ELT): Any type of training program or tutoring service which is designed to help the refugee improve his/her English speaking, reading, writing, comprehension, and cultural competency skills. In the Refugee program, the primary goal and focus of ELT is employment and job readiness. ELT is sometimes referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL), however, ELT is broader in scope, including a wider variety of methods for language acquisition, than the typical ESL classroom setting.

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan (FAMIS): The new health care program in Virginia that has replaced the Children's Medical Security Insurance Plan (CMSIP). Like CMSIP, FAMIS is designed to meet the health care needs of Virginia's uninsured children between the ages of 0 through 18 years, in working families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford private health insurance. Some of the components of FAMIS are: a simplified eligibility process, a new benefits package with cost sharing, employee sponsored health insurance, and a centralized processing site. The program is administered by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).

Immigrant: An alien who is lawfully granted the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. (See also Permanent Resident Alien for more details about this term).

Local Affiliate Agency (AKA – Local Resettlement Agency): An affiliate of a national VOLAG, which is responsible for the resettlement and placement of a certain number of refugees in the state of Virginia. Under contract with the Department of State, the agency must provide a number of services to the refugee (e.g. housing, clothing, furniture, food, cultural orientation, and case management) during the first 90 days following his or her arrival into the United States.

Matching Grant Program: Funded by Congress since 1979, this program provides an alternative approach to State-administered resettlement assistance. Matching grants of \$2,000 per refugee are awarded to national voluntary resettlement agencies that agree to match the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) grant with \$1,000 of cash and in-kind contributions with a minimum of 20 percent in cash. The program's goal is to help refugees attain self-sufficiency within four months after arrival without accessing public cash assistance.

Medicaid: A medical assistance program established under Title XIX of the Federal Social Security Act to enable states to provide medical care to public assistance recipients and medically needy persons: i.e. persons of low income who can meet their maintenance needs but have insufficient income to provide the cost of medical care. The program is financed by state and federal funds.

Mutual Assistance Association (MAA): A refugee organization based upon the principle of self-help, which is incorporated to address the social service needs of the refugee population. MAAs fill gaps in existing community services for the community they represent. An MAA serves as a bridge in promoting successful resettlement and acculturation in the American community. The composition of the organization or governing board is comprised of not less than 51 percent refugees or former refugees and includes both refugee men and women.

Non-citizen: Any person who is not a citizen of the U.S., regardless of his/her specific immigration status.

Office of Newcomer Services (ONS): The office within the Department of Social Services responsible for the administration, development, and supervision of the Refugee Resettlement Program in the state of Virginia.

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR): The agency within the federal Department of Health and Human Services responsible for refugee resettlement services throughout the United States. It is the source of the 100 percent federal funding to states for the Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Refugee Social Services (RSS), Matching Grant, Targeted Assistance, and Discretionary Grant programs.

Parolee: An alien, appearing to be inadmissible to the inspecting officer, allowed into the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit. Parole does not constitute a formal admission to the United States and confers temporary status only, requiring parolees to leave when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist (though some paroles may petition for and receive permanent resident status when a visa becomes available). For the purposes of the Refugee Resettlement Program, this usually refers to a Haitian or Cuban who has been paroled into the United States and/or granted parole status as a Cuban/Haitian Entrant. For more details about the types of parolees who qualify for ORR benefits, see *Appendix A*.

Permanent Resident Alien: An alien admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident. Permanent residents are also commonly referred to as immigrants; however, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) broadly defines an immigrant as any alien in the United States, except one legally admitted under specific nonimmigrant categories (INA section 101(a)(15)). An illegal alien who entered the United States without inspection, for example, would be strictly defined as an immigrant under the INA but is not a permanent resident alien. Lawful permanent residents are legally accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States. They may be issued immigrant visas by the Department of State overseas or adjusted to permanent resident status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the United States.

Reception and Placement: The first phase of the resettlement process after a refugee arrives in the United States. Each refugee is assigned to an American private voluntary agency that, working under a cooperative agreement with the Department of State, provides sponsorship and initial resettlement services during the first three months following the refugee's arrival. These services include housing, essential furnishings, food and other basic necessities, clothing, and additional orientation to life in America.

Refugee: A person who is outside his/her country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. After one year, a refugee may apply for permanent resident alien status. The generic term "refugee" is often used to include asylees, parolees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, and persons paroled into the country for humanitarian reasons or otherwise inadmissible aliens allowed to enter the U.S. under emergency conditions, or because entry serves an overriding public interest.

Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212): The legislation that created the refugee resettlement program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA): Special cash assistance for needy refugees who do not qualify for cash assistance under the TANF or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. Refugee individuals or families must meet the income and resource eligibility standards applied to the TANF program. Currently, RCA provides cash payments for a maximum of 8 months. The full cost of the RCA program is paid from federal funds. *Note: The official and correct name for this program is "Refugee Cash Assistance," not "Refugee Other," which has been used in certain contexts in the past.*

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA): Special medical assistance for needy refugees who do not qualify for Medicaid or FAMIS. Refugees who are eligible for RCA are also eligible for RMA. This assistance is provided in the same manner as Medicaid, but all funds are provided by the federal government. Program eligibility is restricted by a time limitation, which depends on the availability of appropriated funds. Refugees not receiving RCA may be eligible for RMA if their income is slightly above that required for cash assistance eligibility and if they incur medical expenses which bring their net income down to the Medicaid eligibility level. *Note: The official and correct name for this program is "Refugee Medical Assistance," not "Refugee Medicaid Other," which has been used in certain contexts in the past.*

Refugee Social Services: Services provided to refugees in order to assist in general adjustment and especially to promote rapid achievement of self-sufficiency. Priority services include employment counseling, English language training, job placement and vocational training. Other support services include orientation, translation and interpretation, social adjustment counseling, transportation, day care, etc.

Secondary Migrant: A refugee or entrant who moves into Virginia after initial resettlement in another state in the U.S.

Service Contract Provider: An agency or organization under contract with the Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Newcomer Services, to provide specified services to refugees/entrants.

Spenddown (Incurred Medical Expense Spenddown): A provision of the Medicaid and RMA programs for those who meet all of the eligibility requirements except for income. Similar to an insurance policy deductible, an applicant can make up for the difference between their countable income and the medically needy income limit by listing any medical bills that they incur during the "spend-down period." If the entire difference is met, then the individual is determined to be eligible for the remainder of the period.

Sponsor: An individual, church, civic organization, state or local government, or other group or organization which has agreed to help in the reception and placement of refugees in the United States.

State Refugee Coordinator: The individual designated to be responsible for the administration and coordination of public and private resources in refugee resettlement in the state of Virginia.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): A federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues that is designed to help aged, blind, and for disabled people whose income and resources are below a certain level. It provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

Targeted Assistance Program (TAP): An Office of Refugee Resettlement program that funds employment and other services for refugees and entrants who reside in areas of high need. These areas are defined as counties or contiguous county areas where, because of factors such as unusually large refugee or entrant populations, high refugee or entrant concentrations in relation to the overall population, and high use of public assistance, there exists a need for supplementation of other available service resources to help the local refugee or entrant population obtain employment with less than one year's participation in the program.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): A program that provides temporary financial assistance to eligible families with children. The family receives a monthly cash payment to meet their basic needs. To be eligible, a family must be financially needy and must meet certain other requirements.

Unaccompanied Minor: A refugee/entrant child who arrives in the U.S. unaccompanied by a parent or other close adult relative and who will require foster care. The child is eligible to receive culturally and linguistically appropriate child welfare services. Note: The official and correct name for the program that serves unaccompanied minors is the "Refugee Unaccompanied Minors Program," not the "Refugee Medicaid Unaccompanied Minors Program," a term which has been used in certain contexts in the past.

Undocumented Alien (Illegal alien): A non-citizen residing in the U.S. who has violated his/her immigration status. The violation may be the result of an unauthorized entry into the U.S. or of behavior occurring after entry, such as staying beyond the authorized period, engaging in unauthorized employment, or violating other provisions of the immigration laws.

Victim of Trafficking: A person who has been a victim of sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 year of age; or a person who has been recruited, harbored, transported, etc. for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Virginia Independence Program (VIP): The name of Virginia's welfare reform program, which emphasizes personal responsibility and independence. Public assistance is time limited and a comprehensive support structure is put in place in order to move the individual as quickly as possible towards self-sufficiency.

Virginia Initiative for Work Not Welfare (VIEW): The work component of VIP, which consists of work activities, such as placement in unsubsidized private sector employment, assignment to subsidized public employment, and job skills and readiness training designed to place all VIP participants in durable employment opportunities.

Virginia Newcomer Information System (VNIS): A computer program/network that captures information (demographic, public assistance benefits, employment activities, support services, and training) on each refugee receiving services through contract service providers. The data collected is used to prepare required federal reports, assist the Office of Newcomer Services in the supervision and monitoring of contractors, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. In addition, VNIS generates statistics that are requested by legislators, other state agencies, and the public-at-large.

Voluntary Resettlement Agency (VOLAG): One of the ten national non-profit organizations (voluntary agencies) that enter into a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the Department of State to provide basic reception and placement services to refugees/entrants. Affiliates of seven of the national VOLAGs resettle refugees in Virginia: Church World Services, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and the United States Catholic Conference.

VOLAG Affiliate: A local branch of the national voluntary agency that implements the provisions of the cooperative agreement within an established area.

Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP): The term used to refer to the overall program of refugee services available in Virginia: cash and medical assistance, social services, TAP, and discretionary grants. In some situations, the term is used more specifically to refer to the refugee social services component of the program.